UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/CONF.191/12
2 July 2001

Original: ENGLISH

Third United Nations Conference on the
Least Developed Countries
Brussels, Belgium, 14-20 May 2001

BRUSSELS DECLARATION

We, the Governments participating in the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries,

Gathered here in Brussels in May 2001, the first year of the new millennium, to free our fellow women, men and children from the abject and dehumanising conditions of extreme poverty,

Determined to make progress towards the global goals of poverty eradication, peace and development for the least developed countries and their people,

Guided by the principles set out in the Millennium Declaration and its recognition that we have a collective responsibility to uphold these principles of human dignity, equality and equity and to ensure that globalisation becomes a positive force for all the world's people, we commit to working for the beneficial integration of the least developed countries into the global economy, resisting their marginalisation, determined to achieve accelerated sustained economic growth and sustainable development and eradicate poverty, inequality and deprivation,

Recognising that the goals set out at the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries have not been reached and that LDCs as a whole remain marginalised in the world economy and continue to suffer from extreme poverty, LDC progress has been undermined by lack of sufficient human, productive and institutional capacity, indebtedness, low levels of domestic and foreign investments, declining trends in ODA flows, severe structural handicaps, falling or volatile commodity prices, HIV/AIDS and for some of them violent conflicts or post-conflict situations,

Having adopted a Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2001-2010,

Declare that:

1. We are **committed** to the eradication of poverty and the improvement of the quality of lives of people in LDCs by strengthening their abilities to build a better future for themselves and develop their countries.

2. We **believe** that this can only be achieved through equitable and sustained economic growth and sustainable development based on nationally owned and people-centred poverty reduction strategies. Good governance at the national and international level; the rule of law; respect for all internationally recognised human rights, including the right to development; promotion of democracy; security through preventive diplomacy and the peaceful resolution of armed conflicts; gender equality; investment in health, education and social infrastructure; strengthening of productive capacities and institution building are all essential in order to realise the vast and untapped human and economic potential in LDCs.

3. We **recognise** that the primary responsibility for development in LDCs rests with LDCs themselves. But their efforts need to be given concrete and substantial international support from Governments and international organisations in a spirit of shared responsibility through genuine partnerships, including with the civil society and private sector.

4. We are particularly **concerned** by the acute threat of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and emphasise the need for the strongest possible measures to combat this and other communicable diseases, particularly tuberculosis and malaria.

5. We also **emphasise** that improving the welfare of people is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. We have to strive to fully achieve the goals and objectives set out in the Rio Declaration in particular, as regards combating desertification, preservation of biological diversity, supply of safe drinking water and climate change in accordance with common but differentiated responsibilities.

6. We **believe** that increased trade is essential for the growth and development of LDCs. A transparent, non-discriminatory and rules-based multilateral trading system is essential for LDCs to reap the potential benefits of globalisation. The accession of LDCs to the WTO should be encouraged and facilitated. We **commit** ourselves to seizing the opportunity of the fourth WTO Ministerial meeting in Doha in November 2001, to advance the development dimension of trade, in particular for the development of LDCs. We aim at improving preferential market access for LDCs by working towards the objective of duty-free and quota-free market access for all LDCs' products in the markets of developed countries. Measures will also be taken to address problems caused by supply-side constraints. The crucial importance of trade and economic growth must be reflected in poverty reduction strategies.

7. We **recognise** that the most important financing of development comes from domestic resources, and that foreign direct investment is also an important source of capital, know-how, employment and trade opportunities for LDCs. In this regard we emphasise the need for an enabling environment for savings and investment, which includes strong and reliable financial, legal and administrative institutions, sound macro-economic policies and the transparent and effective management of public resources in order to help mobilise both domestic and foreign financial resources. We commit ourselves to seizing the opportunity of the Conference on Financing for Development in March 2002 in Monterrey, Mexico for the mobilisation of resources for development, in particular for the LDCs.

8. We **affirm**, also in this context, that official development assistance (ODA) has a critical role to play in support of LDC development. We take upon ourselves not to spare any effort to reverse the declining trends of ODA and to meet expeditously the targets of 0.15% or 0.20% of GNP as ODA to LDCs as agreed. We undertake to improve aid effectiveness and to implement the OECD-DAC recommendation on untying ODA to LDCs.

9. We are **concerned** with the external debt overhang that affects most LDCs and remains a main obstacle to their development. We affirm the commitment to provide the full financing and the speedy and effective implementation of the enhanced HIPC Initiative, which is essential for freeing domestic budgetary resources for poverty reduction. We undertake to make expeditious progress towards full cancellation of outstanding official bilateral debt within the context of the enhanced HIPC Initiative. We also undertake to provide debt relief to post conflict countries within the flexibility provided under the HIPC framework. The debt sustainability of LDCs, including non-HIPC LDCs, will continue to be subject to review, and consideration may be given to granting a moratorium on debt service payments in exceptional cases.

10. We **stress** the critical importance of an effective follow-up to the Conference at the national, regional and global level, and we commit ourselves to this end. We also ask the Secretary General of the United Nations to ensure that the Conference be followed up in an efficient and highly visible manner.

We **reaffirm** our commitment to the development of the 49 LDCs and to the improvement of the lives of the more than 600 million women, men and children living in those countries. Our common efforts will be an important contribution to achieving the international development goals and realising the universal aspirations for peace, co-operation and development.